

MASTER OF
KUNG FU

MARVEL COMICS GROUPTM



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THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI, MASTER OF KUNG FU

BUCKLER/ESPOIA

YOU'RE
FINISHED,
SHANG-CHI!

NOT EVEN YOUR
MARTIAL ARTS
SKILL CAN
SAVE YOU
FROM--

DARKSTRIDER
AND HIS
WARLORDS
OF THE WEB!

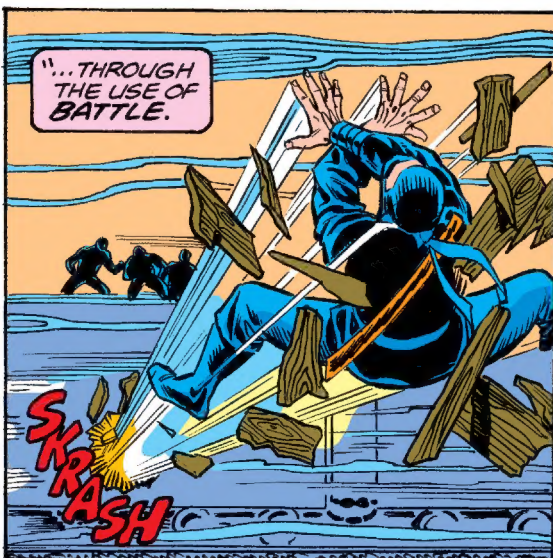


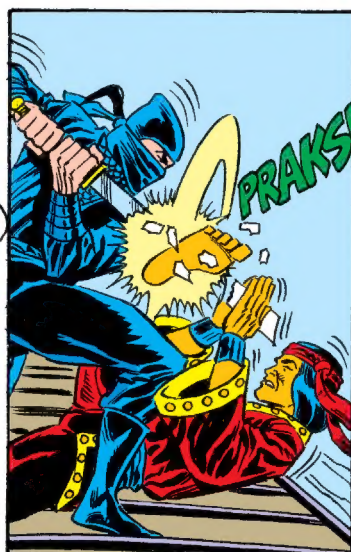
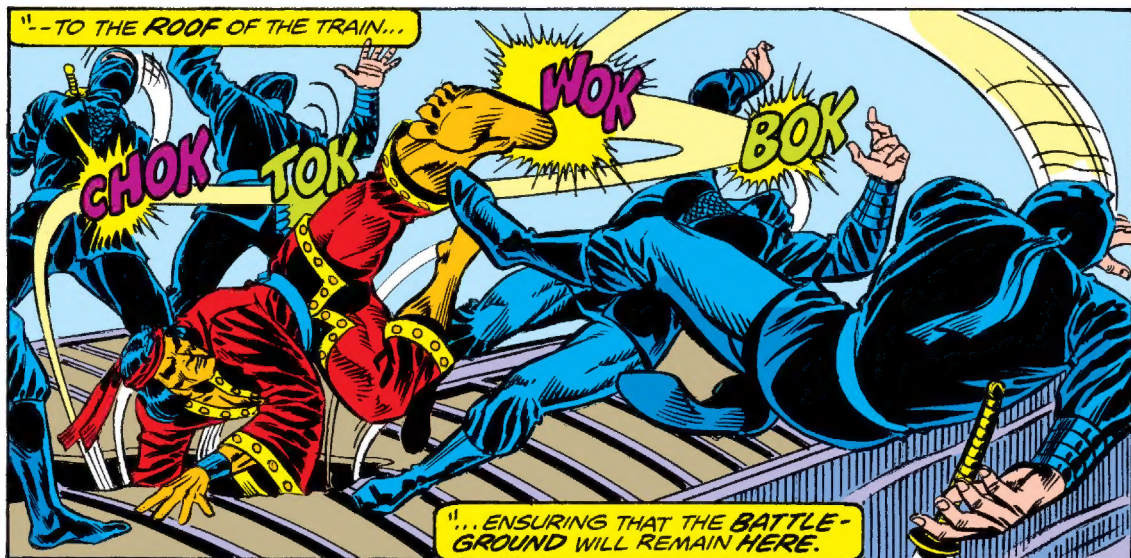
"Call me Shang-Chi, as my **father** did, when he raised me and molded my mind and my body in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. I learned many things from my father: That my name means "The Rising and Advancing of a Spirit," that my body could be forged into a living weapon. Since then, I have learned that my father is **Dr. Fu Manchu** the most insidiously evil man on earth...and that to **honor** him would bring nothing but **dishonor** to the spirit of my **name**.

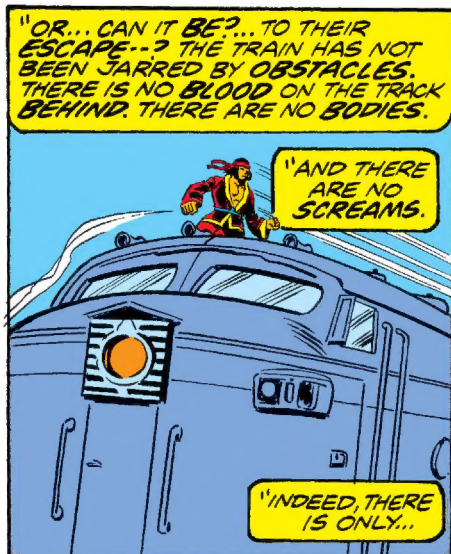
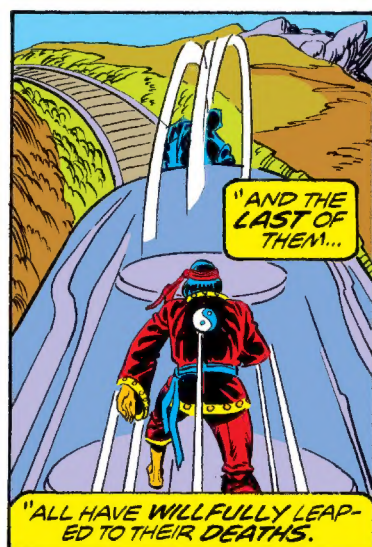
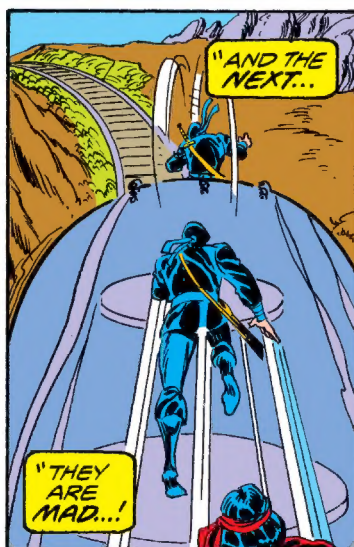
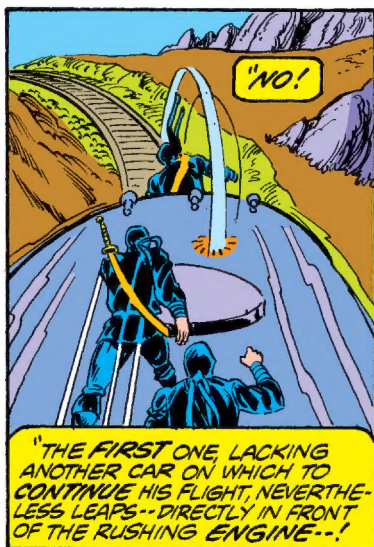
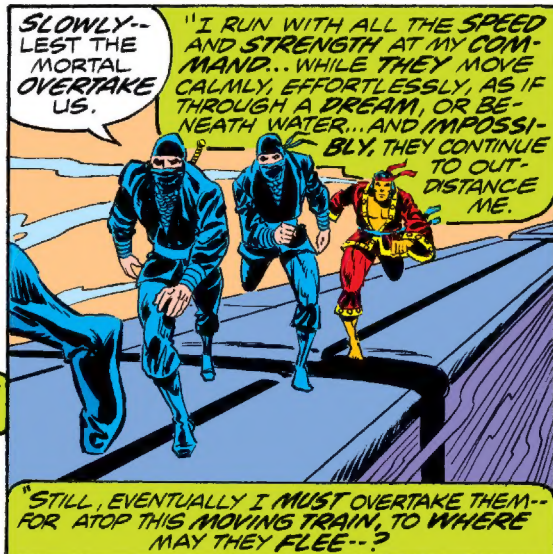
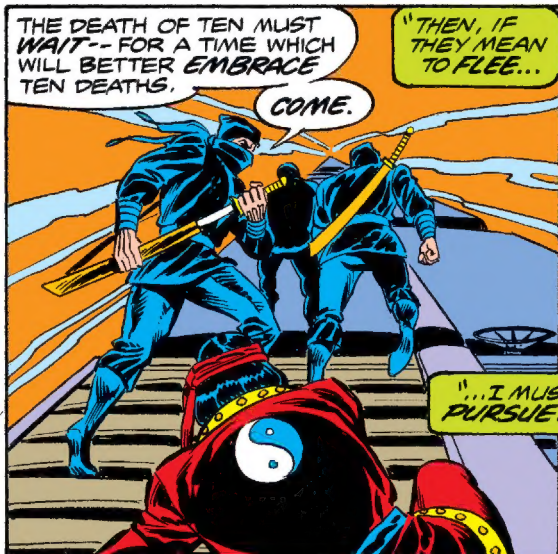
Stan Lee PRESENTS: MASTER OF KUNG FU!™

DOUG MOENCH / WRITER KEITH POLLARD / ARTIST SAL TRAPANI / INKER J. COSTANZA, letterer JANICE COHEN, colorist M. WOLFMAN / EDITOR











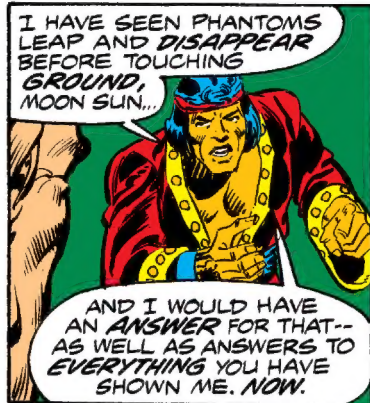
BESIDES, WHAT YOU WISH TO DO IS **IMPOSSIBLE**. WE HAVE ALL **KNOWN** AND **AGREED** UPON THAT LONG AGO...

NOT IF WE CHANGE OUR MINDS ABOUT CERTAIN THINGS -- **YOU**, FOR INSTANCE, MOON SUN...

BUT I DO NOT **WISH** TO CHANGE OUR--

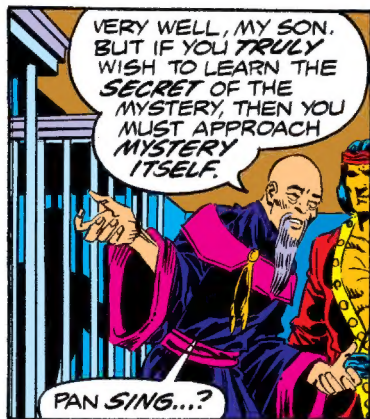


SHANG-CHI--! THEN YOU HAVE **DEFEATED** THE **WARLORDS** OF THE **WEB--?**



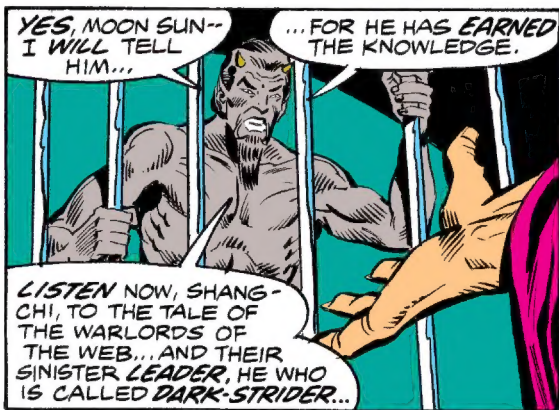
I HAVE SEEN PHANTOMS LEAP AND **DISAPPEAR** BEFORE TOUCHING **GROUND**, MOON SUN...

AND I WOULD HAVE AN **ANSWER** FOR THAT-- AS WELL AS **ANSWERS** TO **EVERYTHING** YOU HAVE SHOWN ME. **NOW**.



VERY WELL, MY SON. BUT IF YOU **TRULY** WISH TO LEARN THE **SECRET** OF THE **MYSTERY**, THEN YOU MUST **APPROACH** **MYSTERY** ITSELF.

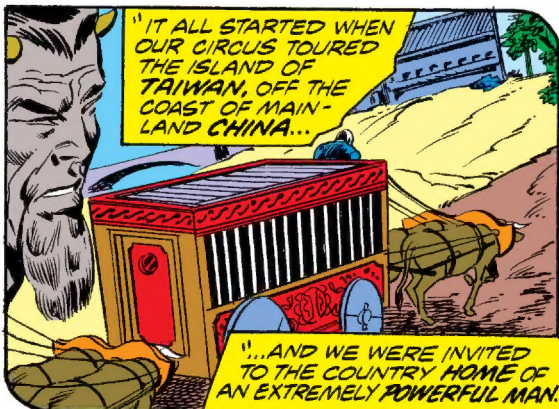
PAN SING...?



YES, MOON SUN-- I WILL TELL HIM...

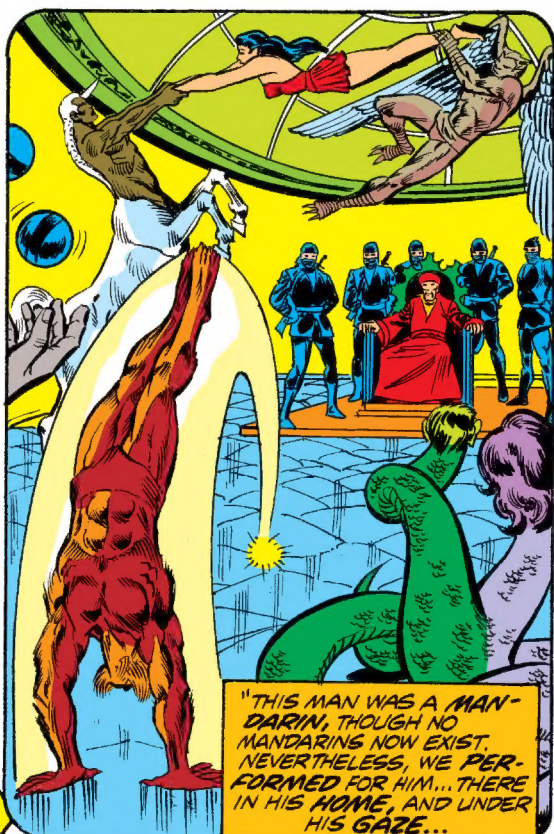
...FOR HE HAS **EARNED** THE **KNOWLEDGE**.

LISTEN NOW, SHANG-CHI, TO THE **TALE** OF THE **WARLORDS** OF THE **WEB**... AND THEIR **SINISTER** **LEADER**. HE WHO IS CALLED **DARK-STRIDER**...



"IT ALL STARTED WHEN OUR **CIRCUS** TOURED THE **ISLAND** OF **TAIWAN**, OFF THE **COAST** OF **MAIN-LAND** **CHINA**...

"...AND WE WERE **INVITED** TO THE **COUNTRY** **HOME** OF AN **EXTREMELY** **POWERFUL** **MAN**...



"THIS MAN WAS A **MAN-DARIN**, THOUGH NO **MANDARINS** NOW **EXIST**. **NEVERTHELESS**, WE **PERFORMED** FOR HIM... THERE IN HIS **HOME**, AND UNDER HIS **GAZE**...



"AND WHEN WE HAD CONCLUDED OUR PERFORMANCE..."



"THE MANDARIN WAS PLEASED."

REMAIN HERE IN MY PALACE, CREATURES OF MYTH, TO PERFORM ONLY FOR ME UNTIL THE END OF YOUR DAYS.

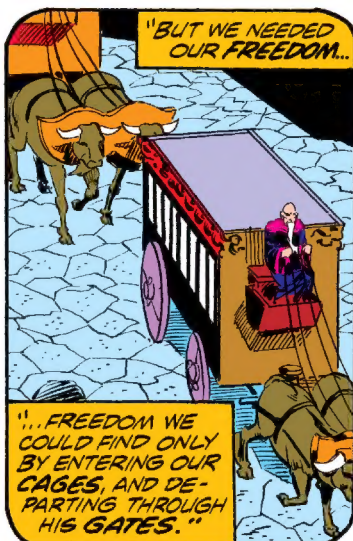


THOUGH WE ARE DEEPLY HONORED BY YOUR GENEROUS PROPOSAL, GREAT ONE, WE MUST HUMBLIBLY DECLINE SUCH HONOR... AND SUCH PROPOSAL.



"THE MANDARIN WAS ENRAGED."

REMAIN HERE AND YOU WILL LIVE IN LUXURY-- BUT DEPART THROUGH THOSE GATES AND YOU WILL FIND ONLY DEATH!!



"BUT WE NEEDED OUR FREEDOM..."

"...FREEDOM WE COULD FIND ONLY BY ENTERING OUR CAGES, AND DEPARTING THROUGH HIS GATES."



SO BE IT--!!

MY NINJAS WILL FIND YOU-- NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO--!!

AND THEY WILL BE LED BY DARK-STRIDER, WHEN HE RETURNS FROM A SIMILAR MISSION OF VENGEANCE IN THE SOUTH PROVINCE! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!!



AS YOU KNOW, THE WARNING WAS NOT IDLE, SHANG-CHI... THOUGH DARK-STRIDER HAS NOT YET JOINED THE SIX WARLORDS OF THE WEB IN THEIR ATTACKS UPON US.

BUT WHO IS THIS DARK-STRIDER...?

A TIGER IN HUMAN FORM-- ABLE TO DEFEAT ANY ARMY OF THE MOST SKILLED NINJA MASTERS IN THE WORLD. HE IS--

LIES, PAN SING--!!



HE IS NOT A TIGER--!

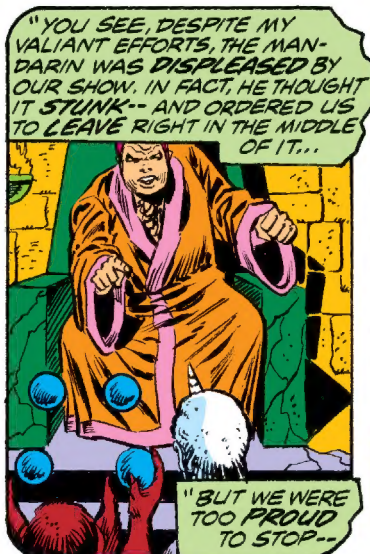
AND OUR TROUBLES DID NOT BEGIN AS YOU SAY--!

THEN, RYNOR, HOW DID THEY BEGIN?



PAN SING'S STORY WAS **TRUE** UP TO THE PART ABOUT OUR **PERFORMANCE...**

WE **WERE NOT** INVITED TO STAY FOR-
EVER...



"YOU SEE, DESPITE MY VALIANT EFFORTS, THE MANDARIN WAS **DISPLEASED** BY OUR SHOW. IN FACT, HE THOUGHT IT **STUNK--** AND ORDERED US TO LEAVE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT..."

"BUT WE WERE TOO PROUD TO STOP--"



"--MUCH OF HIS **WRATH**. AND WHEN WE FINALLY LEFT, HE TOLD US THERE'D BE NO PLACE ON EARTH SAFE FOR OUR LIVES."

"HIS NINJAS--LED BY **DARK-STRIDER** WHEN HE RETURNED FROM A MISSION OF **LOVE** IN THE NORTH PROVINCE--WOULD SLAY US ALL."



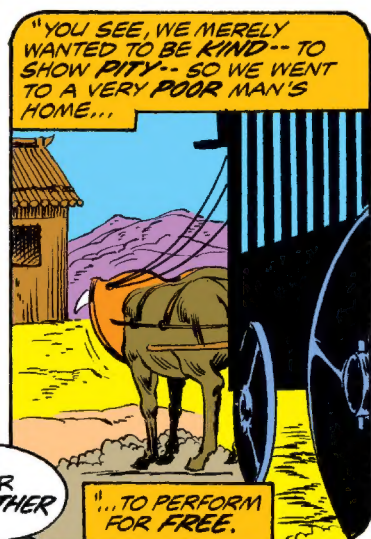
AND YOU SAY THIS **DARK-STRIDER** IS **NOT** A TIGER IN HUMAN FORM--?

NO WAY! HE'S A **MANTIS** IN HUMAN FORM--ABLE TO WASTE ANY **TWENTY** NINJAS IN BATTLE, BUT NOT AN **ARMY**.



AND YOU, ANGEL-HAWK--WHOSE STORY DO YOU FEEL IS MOST **ACCURATE?**

IT GRIEVES ME **SO**RELY, SHANG-CHI... BUT MY ANSWER **MUST** BE, SADLY, THAT **NEITHER** STORY IS ACCURATE.



"YOU SEE, WE MERELY WANTED TO BE **KIND--** TO SHOW **PITY--** SO WE WENT TO A VERY **POOR** MAN'S HOME..."

"...TO **PERFORM** FOR **FREE**."



"BUT WE NEVER EVEN **BEGAN** OUR PERFORMANCE."

"THE **POOR** FARMER AND HIS **WIFE** EMERGED FROM THEIR HUT TO **WELCOME** US..."



"...AND **TRAGEDY** STRUCK--THE **GREATEST** **SADNESS** I HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED..."

"THE **FARMER'S** **WIFE** WAS **SHOCKED** BY OUR **APPEARANCE--** CINNABAR **ESPECIALLY** **TERRIFIED** HER..."



"...AND SHE **DIED**, SHANG-CHI--BEFORE OUR **VERY** **EYES!**"

SHE CLUTCHED HER **BREAST**, GASPING, AND THEN FELL TO THE **GROUND--** **DEAD--** SO VERY, VERY **DEAD**.

"THE ANGLISHED HUSBAND SCREAMED AT US, VOWING TO TRAIN FOR ALL ETERNITY... TO BECOME A MASTER ASS-ASSIN, UNTIL HE COULD STRIDE THE DARKNESS WITH DEATH AT HIS SIDE...

"...AND WITH ALLIES IN VENGEANCE, SIX WARLOR NINJAS.

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BUT IF THE
FARMER TRAINED
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NINJAS ARE *MASTERS OF SHADOW-MAGIC*, SHANG-CHI. NO ONE KNOWS *HOW* THEY DO WHAT THEY DO. BUT HE DID *NOT* BECOME A TIGER... *NOR* IS HE A *MANTIS*.



HE BECAME A *CRANE* IN HUMAN GUISE.

NOT SSSSO-- HE BECAME A SSSSERPENT IN HUMAN GUISSSE.

SYBILIS--?

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YESSS-- AND SHE SSSPEAKSSS THE TRUTH THISSS TIME.

THEN WHAT IS THE TRUTH-- THROUGH YOUR EYES...?

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"WE PERFORMED IN A VASSST HALL. OUR SSSPECTATORSSS WERE OFFICIALSSS OF THE TAIWAN GOVERNMENT. THEY BECAME VERY DRUNK ON THE THRILLSSS OF OUR SSSPECTACLE..."

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"THEIR LEADER AROSSE, HE CONGRATULATED USSS FOR OUR SSSUPREME ABILITIES. BUT UNFORTUNATELY, HE SSSAID, THEY WERE ALL VERY DRUNK."



"HE WASSS AFRAID THEY MIGHT HAVE BLURTED OUT SSSOME GOVERNMENT SSSCRETSSS."

"THERE WOULD BE A MEETING OF THE TAIWAN-ESSSE CABINET IN THE MORNING. IF IT WASSS JUDGED THAT WE OVER-HEARD THESSSE SSSSEC-RETSSS--"



"-- THEY WOULD BE FORCED TO SSSEND THEIR AGENT DARK-SSTRIDER TO KILL USSS ALL."

THE SNAKES ARE FILTHY SLINKING LIARS AND THEY KNOW IT!!



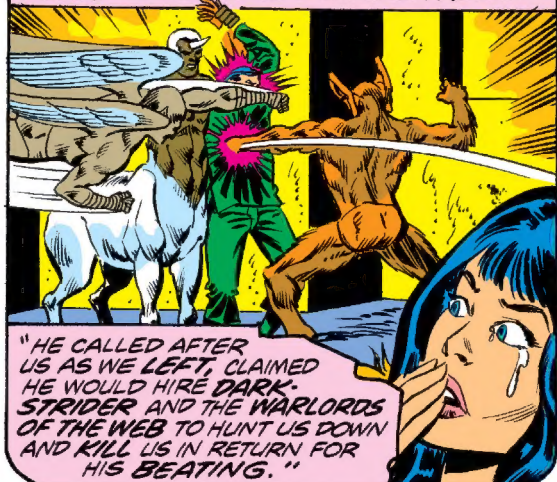
THEN WHAT IS YOUR TRUTH, CINNABAR?

"IN THE STREETS OF TAIWAN, WE SAW A MAN BEATING A WOMAN."



"IT ENRAGED US-- AND WE LEFT OUR WAGONS."

"WE SAVED THE GIRL, BUT WE WERE FOOLS TO LEAVE HER ATTACKER ALIVE."



"HE CALLED AFTER US AS WE LEFT, CLAIMED HE WOULD HIRE DARK-SSTRIDER AND THE WARLORDS OF THE WEB TO HUNT US DOWN AND KILL US IN RETURN FOR HIS BEATING."

THEN DARK-SSTRIDER IS A PAID ASSASSIN?



NO, YOU IDIOT. HE'S A DRAGON IN HUMAN FORM!!

AND YOU, SEENA... YOU ARE SILENT. DO YOU NOT HAVE YOUR VERSION OF THIS NARRATIVE?



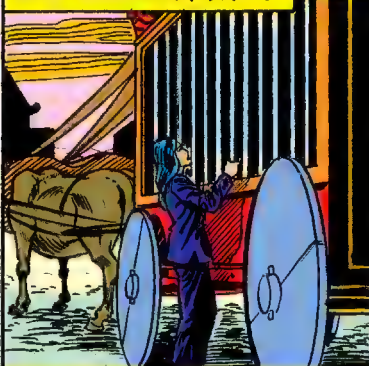
I DO, SHANG-CHI.

I HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO SPEAK MY HEART.



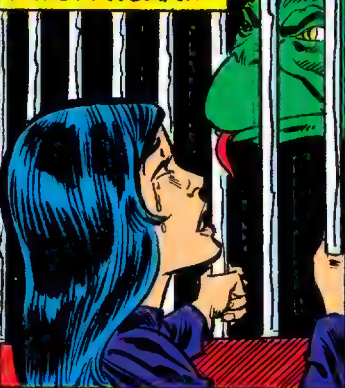
BUT SINCE YOU HAVE ASKED...

"AT **SUNSET**, A WOMAN OF LOVELINESS TOOK PITY ON OUR BIRTHS. OUR APPEARANCES, SHE SAID, BROKE HER HEART AND FILLED THE PIECES WITH BITTER SYMPATHY..."



"SHE COULD NOT BEAR TO SEE US CAGED-- BY BARS..."

"...OR BY THE **REALITY** WHICH HAD MADE US **FREAKS**. SO SHE TOLD US TO LOOK TO THE **MOUNTAINS** WITHOUT **WORRY**..."



"...FOR SHE WOULD SOON **MEND** NATURE'S CRUEL **MISTAKE**."

"SHE WOULD TELL HER **LOVER**-- WHO IS **DARK-STRIDER**-- AND HE WOULD **SLAY** US, SO OUR **MISERY** MIGHT **END**..."



"...AND SO WE WOULD BE **REINCARNATED** IN THE **BEAUTY** SHE WISHED TO **SHARE**."

DO NOT **LISSTEN** TO **SSSEENA**! SHE WILL **LIE** TO YOU ABOUT **DARK-SSSTRIDER**-- TELL YOU HE **ISSS** A **GENTLE** AND **NOBLE** MAN WHO **DOESSS** WHAT HE **DOESSS** OUT OF **LOVE**..."



BUT HE **ISSS** A **SSSPIDER** IN HUMAN FORM!

TIKO...? HAVE YOU AN EXPLANATION?

IT IS NOT MY PLACE TO **SAY**, **SHANG-CHI**.



IT IS **NO ONE'S** PLACE TO EXPLAIN THE **BEAUTY** OF A **MYSTERY**. AND IF I TOLD YOU WHAT I--

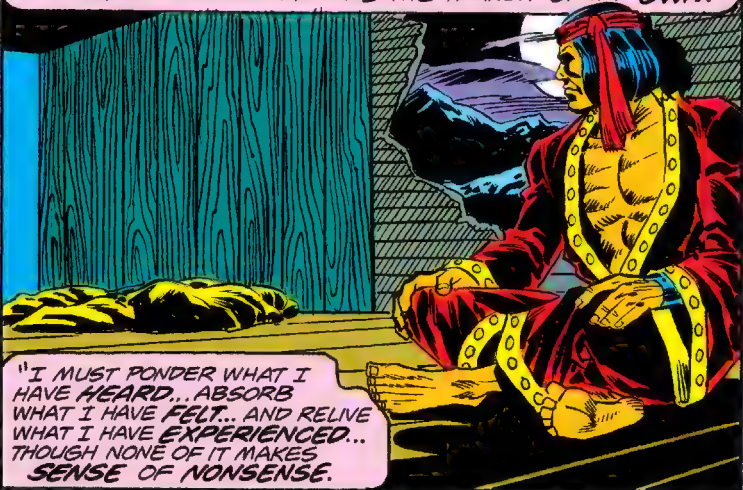
UH, I THINK IT BEST THAT WE GET SOME **SLEEP**, MY CHILDREN-- **ALL** OF US. IT IS A VERY LONG **JOURNEY**.



"I DO NOT **PROTEST**."

"IT WOULD ONLY FALL ON UNLISTENING EARS."

"NEITHER DO I **SLEEP**. THERE IS MUCH TO **THINK** ABOUT, NOW WHEN IT IS QUIET... AND THE **SLUMBERING** THOUGHTS OF **OTHERS** MAY NOT **DISTURB** THE **TRANSIT** OF MY **OWN**."

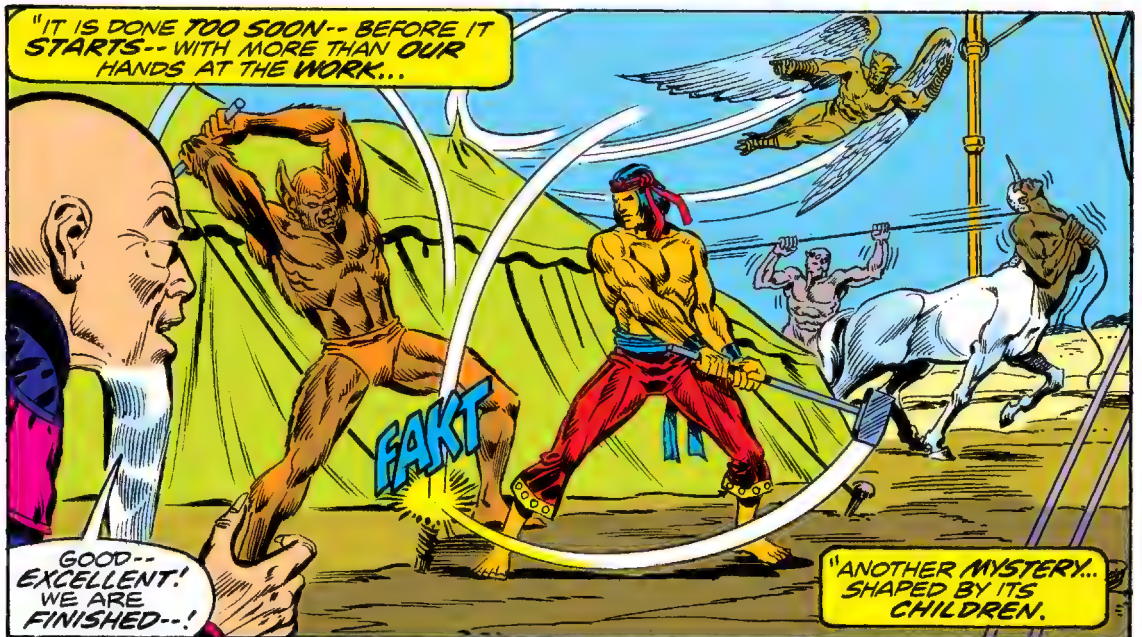
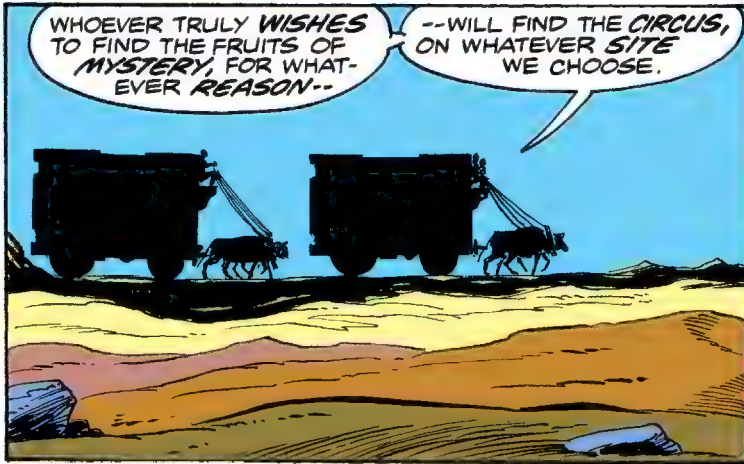
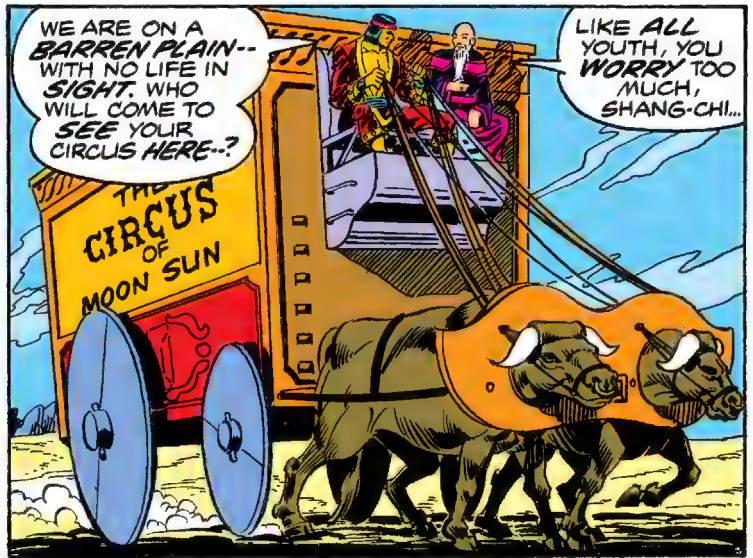


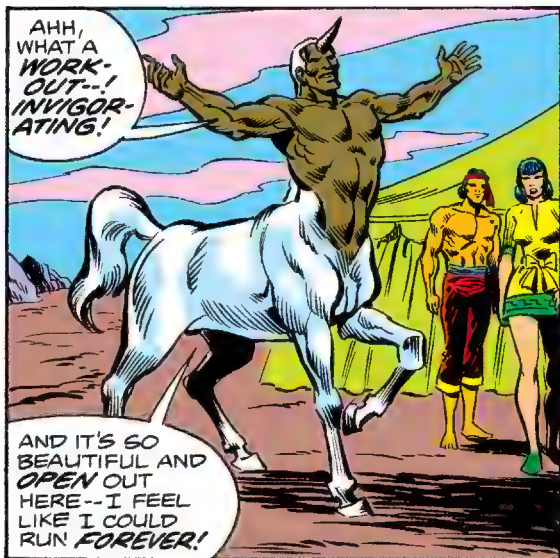
"I MUST **PONDER** WHAT I HAVE **HEARD**... **ABSORB** WHAT I HAVE **FELT**... AND **RELIVE** WHAT I HAVE **EXPERIENCED**... THOUGH NONE OF IT MAKES **SENSE** OF **NONSENSE**."

"THE **QUESTIONS** REMAIN **UNANSWERED**, ONE ABOVE ALL **OTHERS**..."



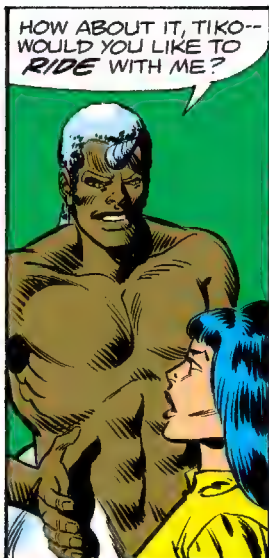
"WHAT AM I **DOING**--"





AHH, WHAT A **WORK-OUT--!** INVIGORATING!

AND IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL AND OPEN OUT HERE--I FEEL LIKE I COULD RUN **FOREVER!**

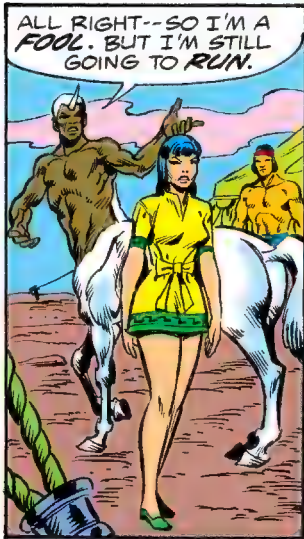


HOW ABOUT IT, TIKO-- WOULD YOU LIKE TO **RIDE** WITH ME?

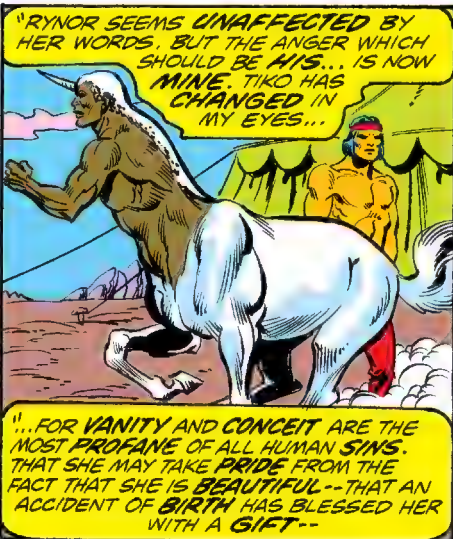


DO NOT BE A **FOOL**, RYNOR! YOU **KNOW** I COULD NEVER GET **CLOSE** TO ONE LIKE YOU!

NEVER AGAIN EVEN **SUGGEST** SUCH A THING!



ALL RIGHT--SO I'M A **FOOL**. BUT I'M STILL GOING TO **RUN**.



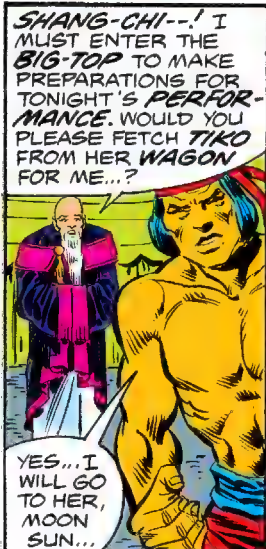
"RYNOR SEEMS **UNAFFECTED** BY HER WORDS. BUT THE ANGER WHICH SHOULD BE **HIS...** IS NOW **MINE**. TIKO HAS **CHANGED** IN MY EYES..."

"...FOR **VANITY** AND **CONCEIT** ARE THE MOST **PROFANE** OF ALL HUMAN **SINS**. THAT SHE MAY TAKE **PRIDE** FROM THE FACT THAT SHE IS **BEAUTIFUL**--THAT AN ACCIDENT OF **BIRTH** HAS **BLESSED** HER WITH A **GIFT**--



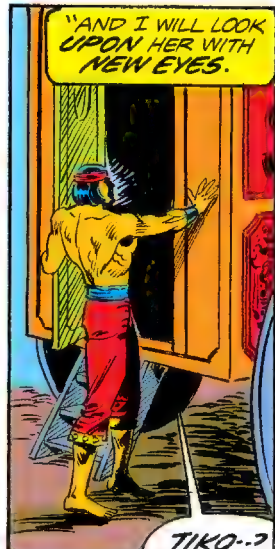
"-- THAT SHE CAN ACT AS THOUGH HER BEAUTY WERE AN **ACCOMPLISHMENT** TO BE **ADMIRED** AND **APPROACHED** ONLY BY A **CHOSEN FEW**..."

...SIMPLY **REPULSES** ME.



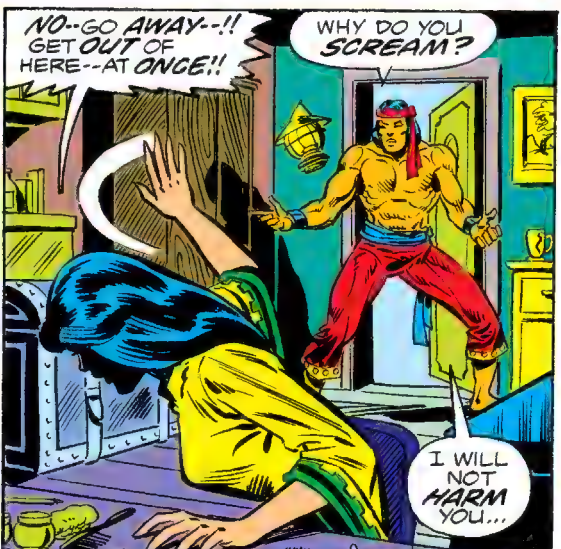
SHANG-CHI--! I MUST ENTER THE **BIG-TOP** TO MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR TONIGHT'S **PERFORMANCE**. WOULD YOU PLEASE FETCH **TIKO** FROM HER **WAGON** FOR ME...?

YES... I WILL GO TO HER, **MOON SUN**...



"AND I WILL LOOK **UPON** HER WITH **NEW EYES**."

TIKO--?



NO--GO AWAY--!! GET **OUT** OF HERE--**AT ONCE!!**

WHY DO YOU **SCREAM**?

I WILL NOT **HARM** YOU...

HARM ME--?! NO, YOU WILL NOT HARM ME! YOU CANNOT HARM ME! BUT YOU STILL HAD TO FIND OUT, DIDN'T YOU--?! YOU COULDN'T LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE--!

YES, SHANG-CHI, I'M JUST LIKE THEM-- BUT WORSE!

I DON'T HAVE A CAGE TO HIDE IN--!

I DON'T HAVE THE FREEDOM OF BARS--!

THIS BEAUTIFUL FACE, SHANG-CHI-- THIS MASK OF DECEIT-- THESE UGLY PIECES OF FALSE BEAUTY-- THIS WIG, LATEX, FALSE LIPS, FALSE EYEBROWS--

--THESE ARE THE BARS OF MY CAGE!!

"I... HAVE WRONGED HER... BY MISJUDGING HER... BY ATTEMPTING TO JUDGE HER AT ALL. THERE IS NOTHING TO SAY..."

NOW GET OUT!! JUST GET OUT AND LEAVE ME ALONE!!

"I LEAVE, UNAWARE THAT MY FEET CARRY ME..."

"THERE IS ONLY ONE SPECTATOR INSIDE, A MAN... IN THAT HAT AND OVERCOAT..."

SHANG-CHI-- WHERE IS MOON SUN?!

IS HE NOT HERE, IN THE TENT?

"...TOWARD THE TENT."

NO--! WE THOUGHT HE WAS IN TIKO'S WAGON WITH YOU! WE'VE SEARCHED ALL THE OTHER WAGONS-- THAT MEANS HE'S DISAPPEARED, SHANG-CHI...

...OR THAT DARK-STRIDER'S TIME HAS COME--!

YOU'VE GOT TO FIND HIM-- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! HURRY-- LOOK OUTSIDE--!

"MY MIND IS STILL... NUMB."

"I RUSH FROM THE TENT WITHOUT THINKING..."

"... THEN SLOWLY, I REALIZE THE FOOLISHNESS OF MY ERRAND..."

"FOR, OUT HERE ON THIS BARREN PLAIN, WITH NO LIFE IN SIGHT... THERE IS NOWHERE MOON SUN COULD HAVE GONE."

"BUT WHEN I RE-ENTER THE TENT--"

"THEY ARE ALL GONE."

"INCLUDING THE SINGLE SPECTATOR, OF WHOM NOTHING REMAINS..."

"...BUT A HAT, AND OVERCOAT..."

HELP US, SHANG-CHI!!

"NO! IT IS MADNESS WHICH GREET'S MY EYES--!"

"A HUGE WEB SPANNING HIGH ABOVE, NEAR THE **CEILING** OF THE TENT, SHIMMERING AND TREMBLING WITH THE VIBRATIONS OF LIFE STRUGGLING AGAINST **DEATH**, TRAPPING **MYSTERIES** IN ITS STRANDS OF PRECISE SYMMETRY AND PERVERSED **BEAUTY**. CLINGING TO THE CENTER OF THE WEB, FACING **DOWNWARD** INTO MY EYES, A CRUEL SPIDER OF **HATE**..."

"HE IS **DARK STRIDER**."

LEAVE, MORTAL--WHILE THE CHANCE REMAINS.

"HE CAN BE NO OTHER."

"THIS ROPE... WILL TAKE ME TO HIM."

LISTEN TO ME-- EACH OF THE SIX MUST **DIE**. LEAVE THEM TO ME--TO **DEATH**.

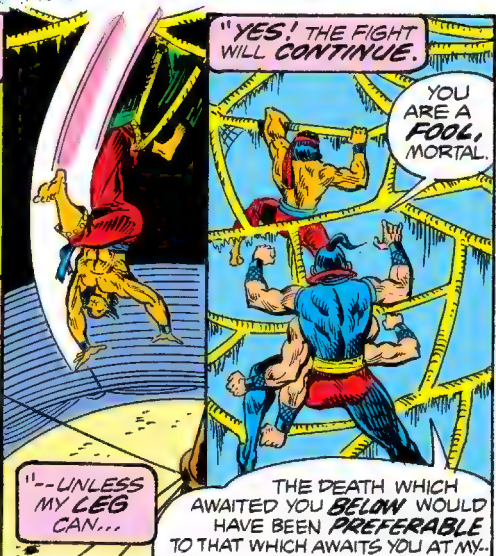
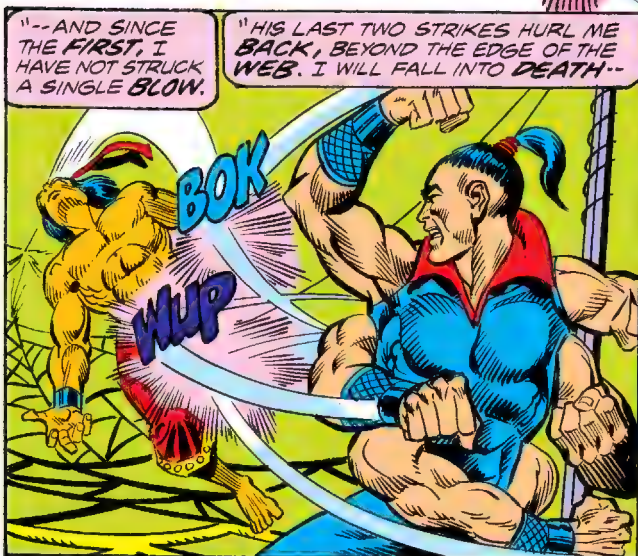
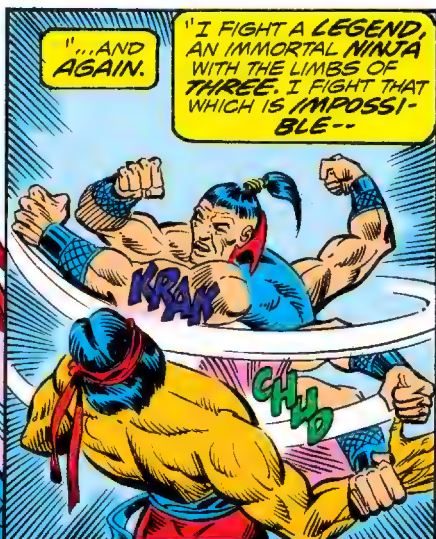
"I CLIMB HIGHER."

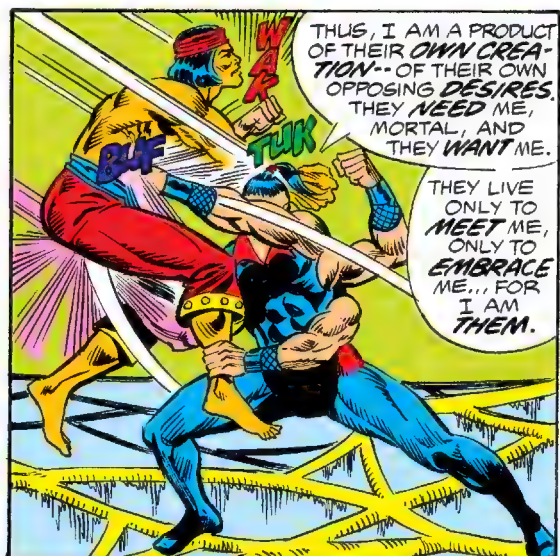
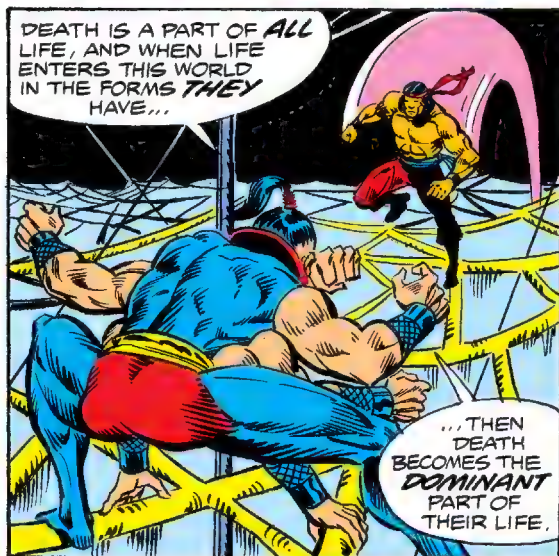
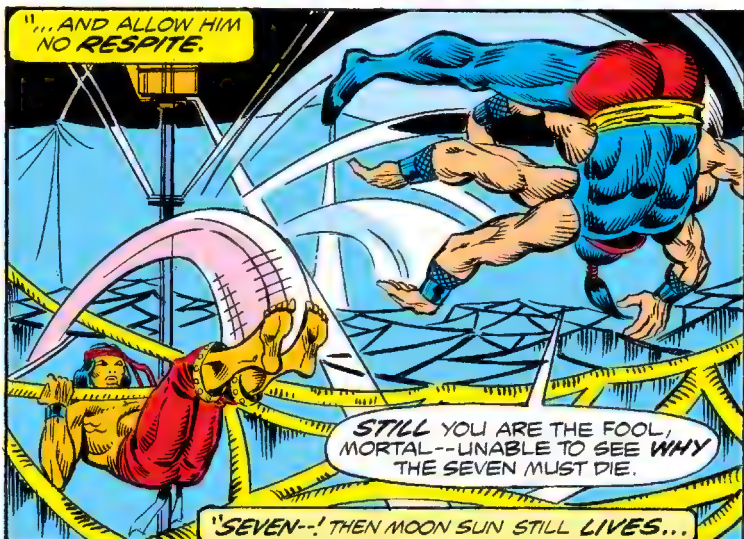
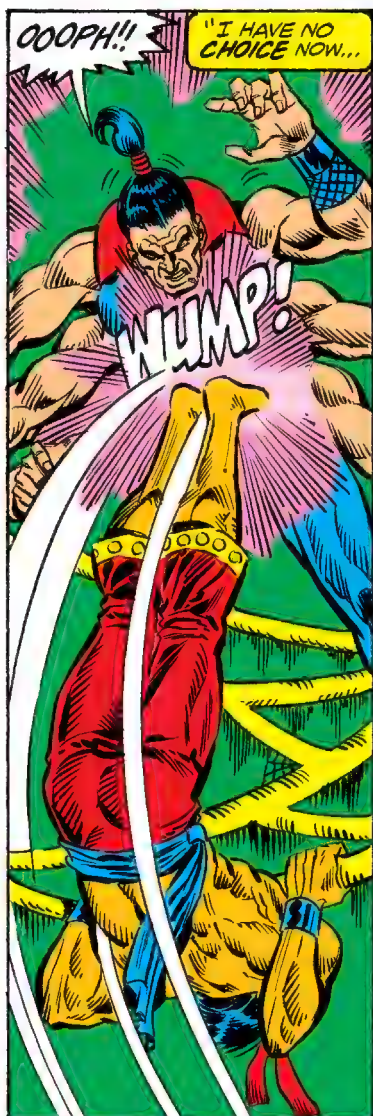
THEY MUST **DIE**-- TO END **MYSTERY**, AND TO SATISFY **FATE**.

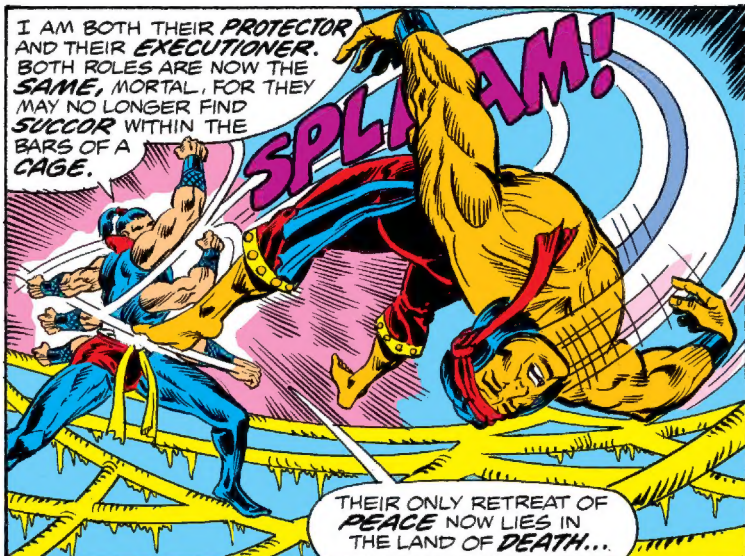
"I REACH THE WEB."

DO NOT **MEDDLE** IN THIS NECESSARY FULFILLMENT OF **FATE**.

"I SAY **NOTHING**."



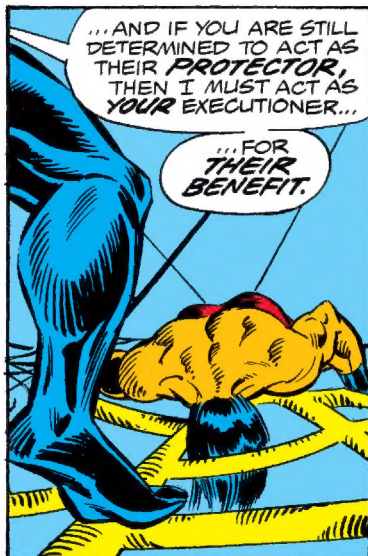




I AM BOTH THEIR **PROTECTOR** AND THEIR **EXECUTIONER**. BOTH ROLES ARE NOW THE **SAME**, MORTAL, FOR THEY MAY NO LONGER FIND **SUCCOR** WITHIN THE BARS OF A **CAGE**.

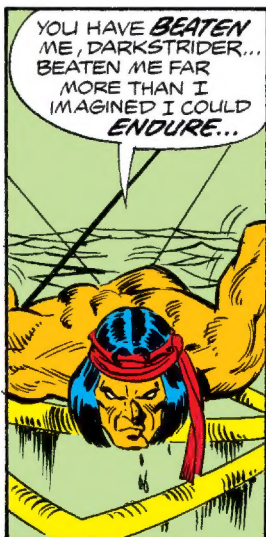
SPLAM!

THEIR ONLY RETREAT OF **PEACE** NOW LIES IN THE LAND OF **DEATH**...



...AND IF YOU ARE STILL DETERMINED TO ACT AS THEIR **PROTECTOR**, THEN I MUST ACT AS **YOUR EXECUTIONER**...

...FOR **THEIR BENEFIT**.



YOU HAVE **BEATEN** ME, DARKSTRIDER... BEATEN ME FAR MORE THAN I IMAGINED I COULD **ENDURE**...



I AM WITHOUT **STRENGTH** NOW... AND **PAIN** FILLS MY EVERY **MOVE**...



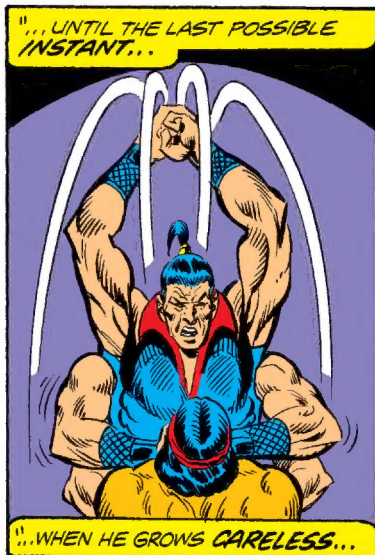
BUT **YES**... I AM STILL **DETERMINED** TO SERVE AS THEIR **PROTECTOR**...



...FOR **THEIR BENEFIT**.

THEN, AS **YOU** MUST DO WHAT **YOU WILL**, I WILL DO WHAT **I MUST**.

"I REMAIN **HELPLESS**, **UNMOVING**, **WEAK**... CONVINCING HIM OF MY **DEFEAT**..."



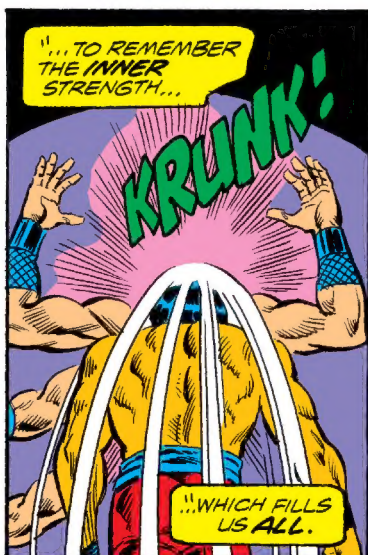
"...UNTIL THE LAST POSSIBLE **INSTANT**..."

"...WHEN HE GROWS **CARELESS**..."



"...AND FAILS AS A **NINJA**..."

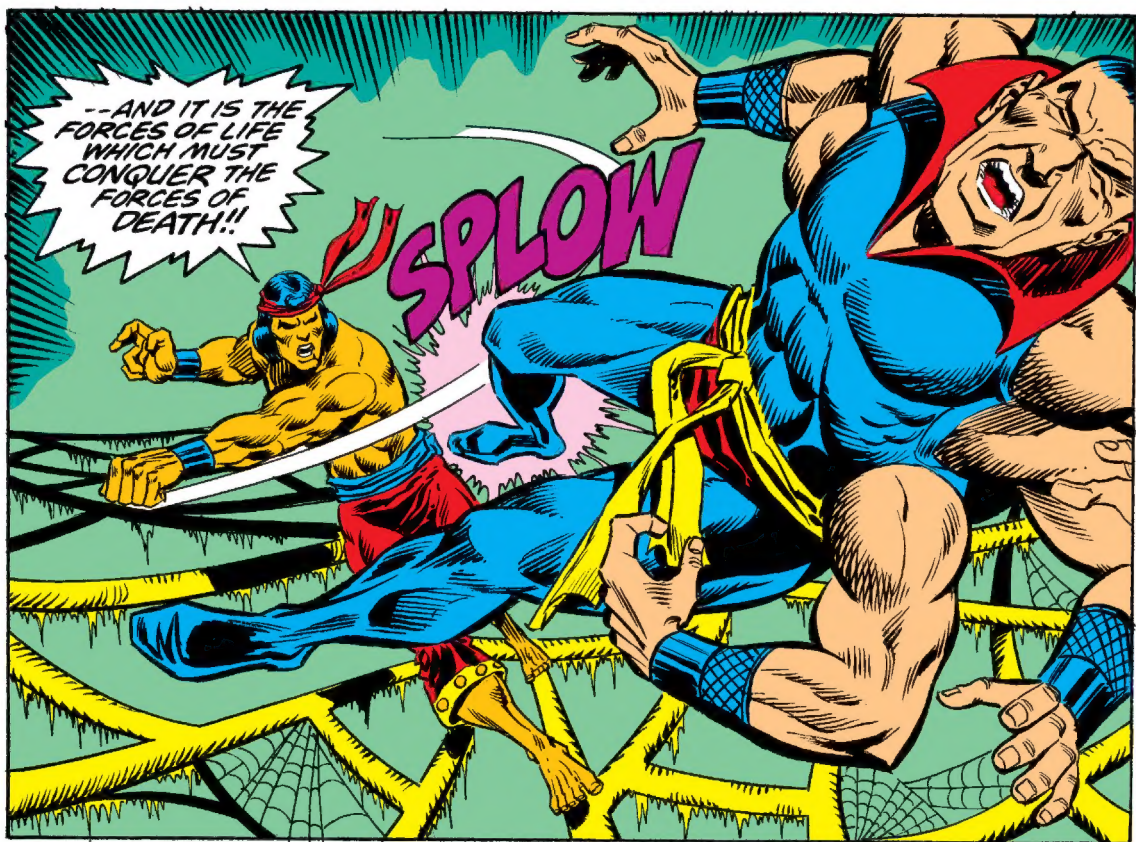
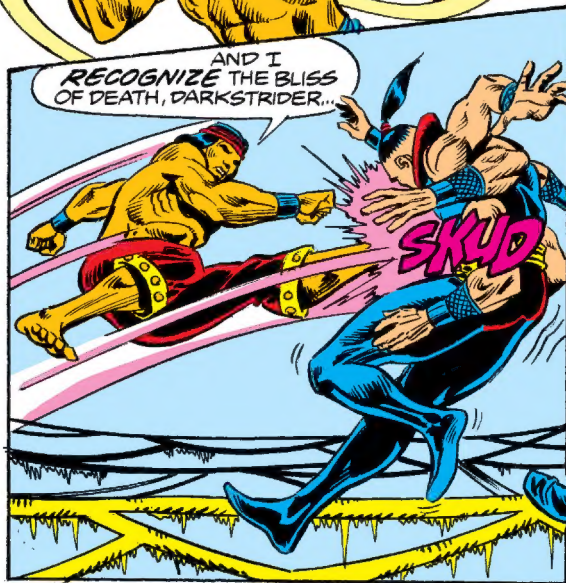
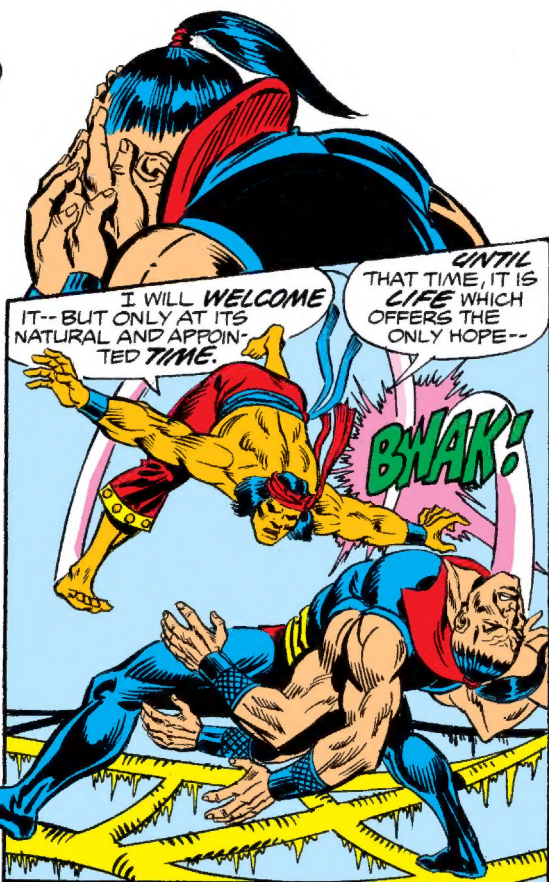
RAK PAK



"...TO REMEMBER THE **INNER STRENGTH**..."

KRUNK!

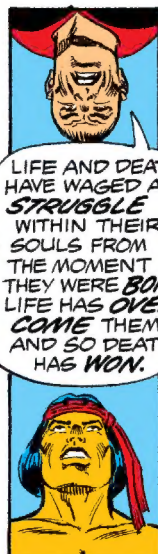
"...WHICH FILLS US **ALL**."



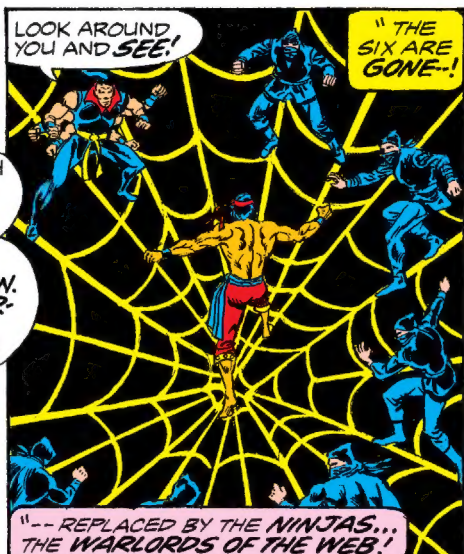


LISTEN TO ME, MORTAL--YOU FIGHT AGAINST THEIR WILLS! EVEN AS THEY DESPERATELY ENLISTED YOU TO PROTECT THEIR LIVES--

--SO TOO DID THEY BESEECH DEATH TO CLAIM THEM!



LIFE AND DEATH HAVE WAGED A STRUGGLE WITHIN THEIR SOULS FROM THE MOMENT THEY WERE BORN. LIFE HAS OVER-COME THEM, AND SO DEATH HAS WON.



LOOK AROUND YOU AND SEE!

"THE SIX ARE GONE--!"

"-- REPLACED BY THE NINJAS... THE WARLORDS OF THE WEB!"



WE ARE FREAKS, SHANG-CHI--EXILES FROM THE HOUSE OF BEAUTY.

NOW YOU KNOW, AND IT SADDENS US DEEPLY.

BE WARNED-- YOU HAVE FAILED TO PROTECT US, AND WE SHOULD RIP THE FLESH FROM YOUR BONES!

YOU HAVE LOSST...ASSS WE KNEW YOU WOULD...

...BUT SSSSO TOO HAVE WE WON, SSSSHANG-CHI. THUSSS, WE THANK YOU.

DO NOT GUESS AT THE RIDDLE, SHANG-CHI, FOR THE QUESTION IS ITS OWN ANSWER.

"THEY SPEAK IN VOICES OF THE SIX..."



"... AND NOW, THEY DRAW THEIR SWORDS.

"TO ATTACK--?"



"NO.

"AS ONE, THEY HURL THE BLADES UPWARD, SLASHING THE ROOF OF THE TENT..."



"... BEFORE LEAPING THROUGH THAT SLASH..."

"...AND BEYOND.



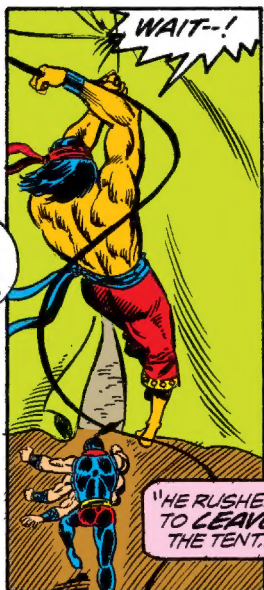
YOU STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND, MORTAL... NOR WILL YOU UNDERSTAND, BEFORE YOUR TIME. I AM ONLY WHAT I AM, AND DEATH IS NOT EVIL...

IT IS ONLY THE FINAL MYSTERY.



DO NOT SEEK TO CAPTURE OR **EXPLAIN** THAT MYSTERY-- FOR IN SO DOING, LIFE WILL LOSE ITS **TASTE** FOR THIS WORLD...

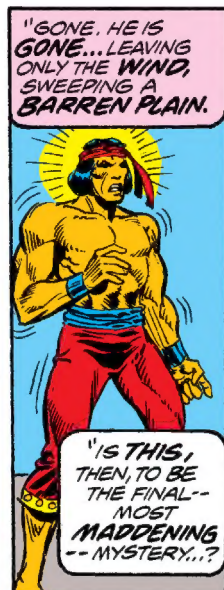
...AND ALL WILL DWELL WITH ME.



"HE RUSHES TO LEAVE THE TENT..."



"...LEARN SO MANY ANSWERS... LEARN IF--"



"IS THIS, THEN, TO BE THE FINAL-- MOST MADDENING-- MYSTERY...?"



"THERE IS **NOTHING**... AS IF NOTHING HAD EVER EXISTED.



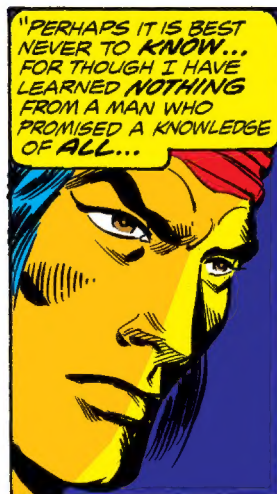
"BUT WAIT..."



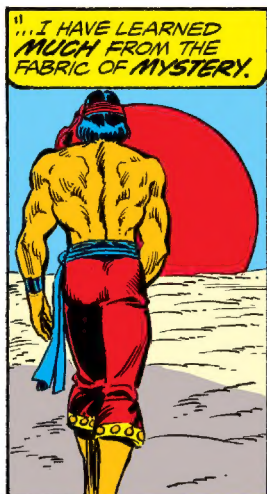
"A TATTER OF MOON SUN'S ROBE... LEFT BEHIND BY DARKSTRIDER...?"



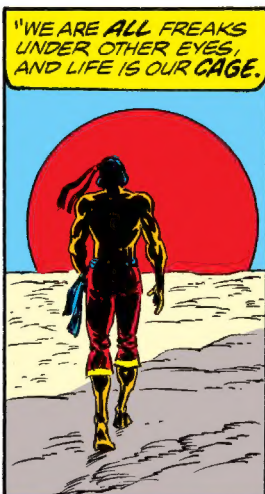
"DOES IT MEAN THAT MOON SUN AND DARKSTRIDER WERE THE SAME...?"



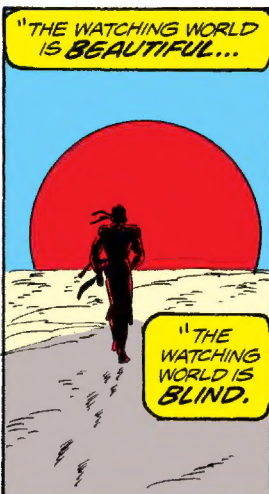
"PERHAPS IT IS BEST NEVER TO KNOW... FOR THOUGH I HAVE LEARNED NOTHING FROM A MAN WHO PROMISED A KNOWLEDGE OF ALL..."



"I HAVE LEARNED MUCH FROM THE FABRIC OF MYSTERY."



"WE ARE ALL FREAKS UNDER OTHER EYES, AND LIFE IS OUR CAGE."



"THE WATCHING WORLD IS BEAUTIFUL..."

"THE WATCHING WORLD IS BLIND."

"A LATER THOUGHT, FROM THE **LIBRARY** IN SMITH'S TOWNHOUSE: THE **CIRCUS** IS MANY THINGS TO MANY PEOPLE... BUT IN THE LANGUAGE OF ITS ORIGIN, THE WORD '**CARNIVAL**' MEANS '**FAREWELL TO THE FLESH.**' IT IS SO."

NEXT: SHANG-CHI FIGHTS FOR HIS LIFE IN THE BACK ALLEYS OF HONG KONG AGAINST THE MARTIAL ARTS EXPERT KNOWN ONLY AS...

CAT!